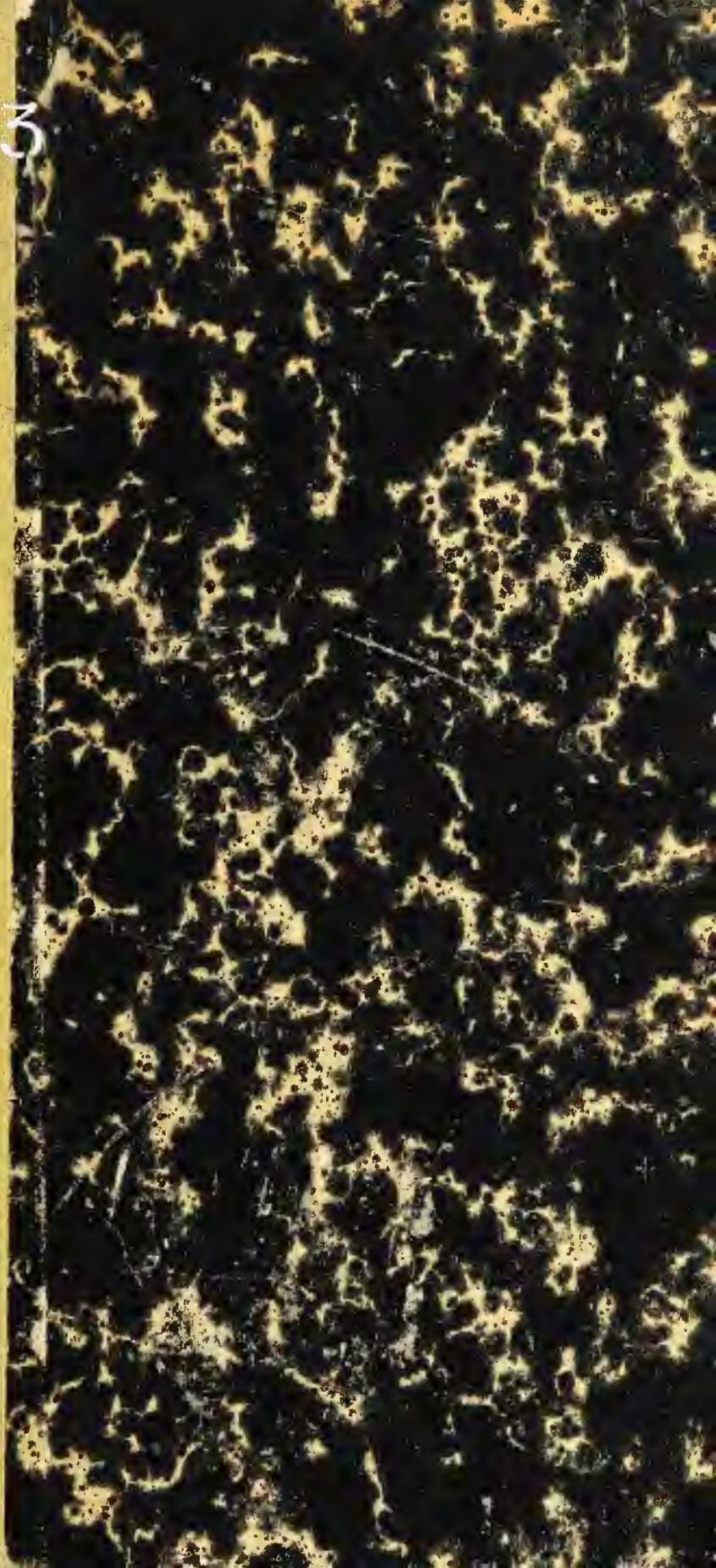
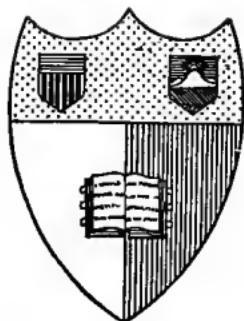


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# Thoreau

By Emily R Lyman



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‘.Each hour has its lesson, and each life ;  
And if we miss one life, we shall not find  
Its lesson in another ; rather go  
So much the less complete forevermore,  
Still missing something that we cannot have.’”

— ANON.





. . . “Our religion is as unpublic and incom-  
municable as our poetical vein, and to be ap-  
proached with as much love and tenderness.

— THOREAU

“That one who does not stand so near to any  
man as to see the divinity in him is truly  
alone.”

— THOREAU

. . . “Our ideal is the only real.”

— THOREAU



HAVE long thought, in regard to Thoreau, that the last word has not been spoken. He is yet to be revealed to the world, not as a thinker merely, not as a philosopher, not as a Stoic; but, preeminently, as a man of the Spirit,—one in whom “the lusts of the flesh” were not fulfilled.

Many years ago, I found in a volume of sermons the expression, “one world at a time,” quoted and harshly criticized as embodying a sentiment unworthy and unbecoming a man whose interests were supposed to extend beyond the limits of this stage of existence. I will here add—what I have since learned—that the writer of this criticism had no knowledge of the fact that he was quoting the words of Thoreau. A superficial reading *might* convey the idea that what was meant was simply a thoughtless acceptance of present good—“Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die.” As uttered by one the spirituality of whose nature

was a marked characteristic, “one world at a time” may be translated into the higher language of “Take therefore no thought for the morrow” . . . “If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?”

He who in his last moments desired to have eliminated from his manuscripts everything “that tended to mirthfulness, as not becoming the deep seriousness with which he viewed life,” must have had larger interests, deeper affections, nobler aspirations than those which bound him to earth. Interpreting his words by his life, how significant they become! How full of unquestioning faith! A faith that was stayed upon the unfailing goodness of God, and that weakened not when disease and death put it to the test.

As I pondered in stillness over this thought of “one world at a time,” something within me seemed to say, “That is all God gives us:”

for the *present*, “*one world*.” Shall we ask for more? Shall we pry impatiently into the secrets of the Beyond? Shall we not rather

“Grateful take the good [we] find,  
The best of now and here?”

Is not the Father waiting to reveal to us the glory of that which is to come *after*, when with unsealed eyes we shall be able to bear its exceeding brightness? “One world at a time” is not an expression of indifference to that which shall be; rather is it a childlike acquiescence in the gift of the present moment.

He who has lived in obedience to “the beautiful laws,” and in conscious harmony with the Eternal Law-Giver, aspiring to “walk even with the Builder of the Universe”; he who has believed that “by faithfulness faith is earned,” and that “faith is sight and knowledge,” will have no misgivings, no haunting fears as earthly forms grow dim before his fading sight. “Resting quietly in God’s palm,” assured that in death as in life, he need fear no evil; knowing that the next

step will bring him nearer home — that home where the true self can develop and grow into “the image of the heavenly.”

If there are those among us who with our loving thoughts of Thoreau, have still a feeling of regret that he could not have spoken more tenderly of Jesus, — let them recall the fact that in espousing the cause of the slave — not merely with mighty words of rebuke, shot straight at the heart of greed and cowardice, but with personal ministrations of aid and sympathy to the flying fugitive, — he was acting in the light of that great commandment “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,” and working in the spirit of Him who said, “In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Is not the *unconscious* discipleship acceptable to Him who taught the Galilean peasants that loving service to humanity is one condition of entrance into the Kingdom of the blessed?

That Thoreau expected to find the

new life *satisfying*, is very clear. Shortly before he passed away, in the season of returning birds, and awakening blossoms, he said to a dear friend\* who came to visit him, and who was describing his walk through the country, and across a field in which he had just seen a robin,—

“Yes! This is a beautiful world; *but I shall see a fairer.*”

These are the words of conviction. *His* was no weak hope of immortality. He had experienced it. He knew whereof he was speaking. Like the eternal hills, his foundation was sure.

May we not believe that in the years that have passed since Thoreau entered into “that realm and home of life” where no shadow comes between the soul and its true light, that *there* his eyes have been freshly anointed — the Open Vision has been vouchsafed him? No longer seeing in part, but knowing even as he is known: beloved of Him who was and is,

“Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord.”

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\*Mr. Edmund Hosmer

*One hundred and ten copies of this  
Essay, as written by Miss Lyman, have  
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